

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 and 27-28 have been canceled without prejudice. Claims 20 and 22 have been amended. New claim 29 has been added. 9-26 and 29 are currently pending. Reexamination and allowance of the pending claims is respectfully requested.

First, claim 22 has been amended to correct a typographical error relating to its dependency.

Second, the allowance of claims 9-19 is gratefully acknowledged.

Third, the allowability of claim 21 is gratefully acknowledged. Claim 21 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 20, and is therefore submitted to be in condition for allowance. Claims 22-23 depend from claim 21 and are also in condition for allowance.

Claim 20 stands ejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by USP 5,284,198 to Kauka ("Kauka"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 20 has been amended to recite that the connector is a single connector, with the first end of each support coupled to the same connector. In contrast, Kauka provides separate connectors 14 for the first end of each support, so that Kauka does not meet the claim limitations of a single connector that is connected to the first end of each support.

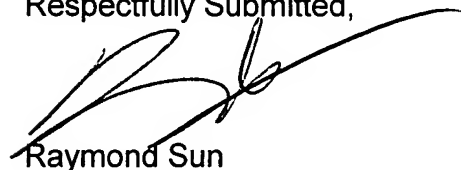
Claims 24-26 depend from claim 20, and are submitted to be allowable for the same reasons.

Claims 27 and 28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by USP 6,095,230 to Mitchell et al. ("Mitchell"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 27 has been canceled and replaced by new claim 29, which recites, among other limitations, that each support further comprises a rigid portion having a free end, and a resilient portion having a free end connected to the free end of the rigid portion. In contrast, FIG. 10 in Mitchell does not disclose any support that has both a rigid portion and a resilient portion having a free end that is connected to a free end of the rigid portion. Thus, claim 29 is submitted to be allowable over Mitchell.

Thus, all pending claims are submitted to be in condition for allowance. The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned if there are informalities that can be resolved in a phone conversation, or if the Examiner has any ideas or suggestions for further advancing the prosecution of this case.

Respectfully Submitted,



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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this paper and its enclosures are being deposited with the United States Postal service as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to the Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on the date shown below.

Date: October 28, 2003

By:


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